

EXHIBIT 8
DATE 3/12/09
HB 695

Amendment to NB 645

Montana Historical Society Budget

Provide sufficient funding to reduce the vacancy savings in all program areas of the Montana Historical Society budget from 7% to 4%.

Rationale:

The Montana Historical Society exists for the use, learning, culture, and enjoyment of the citizens of, and visitors to, the State of Montana. MHS acquires, preserves, and protects historical records, art, documents, photographs, museum objects, historical places, sites, and monuments. MHS maintains an historical museum, a library and archives, provides educational programs and services for teachers and the general public, and publishes the state historical magazine and newsletter. MHS also administers preservation and antiquities acts, supports commissions with state historical orientation, and provides technical assistance to all Montana museums, historical societies, preservation programs, and owners of historic resources.

The MHS performs all of these services with a relatively small number of employees, 61 FTE. The concern is that any further cuts in personnel will adversely affect the agency's ability to perform its duties and place undue stress on remaining employees. In fact, the last full inventory of the collection was completed in 1985. The last three legislative audit reports, including the report issued in November 2008, have expressed concern with controls over the collection. According to the audit report, the museum has over 50,000 historical artifacts in its collection, currently valued at \$58.4 million, and receives between 250 and 1,500 new artifacts each year. The lack of a complete inventory process increases the possibility the items could be lost or stolen without detection by the program.

Grateful to MHS

The Helena Public School's Indian Education For All team would like to extend its appreciation to the Montana Historical Society for another year of partnership that provided extraordinary opportunity for staff and students alike.

The society has repeatedly opened its doors and welcomed teacher training workshops and IEFA events. As an example, this year more than 600 senior government students from Helena High, Capital High and PAL attended all day Indian Education For All programs that assembled prominent Indian educators from across the state. From Indian law to powerful cultural presentations, Indian history raced across the Capitol complex.

Our IEFA team is grateful to MHS Director Richard Sims, curator Bill Mercer, outreach manager Kirby Lambert and his entire staff. You are consummate professionals! Special thanks to outreach/interpretive specialist Deb Mitchell, whose advice, passion and organizational skills were paramount in providing significant educational opportunity for our teachers and students.

In closing, the Montana Historical Society continues to champion the rich diversity of our state. We are most fortunate.

Joseph Anderson
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